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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the common sources of etiologies of conflict in multicultural contexts. Multicultural communication is the creation and sharing of meaning among citizens of the same geopolitical system who belong to divergent tributary cultures. The sources of conflict in multicultural relations can be grouped into five broad categories. These include: (1) the allocation of resources; (2) historical legacy; (3) attitudinal interference; (4) lack of cultural literacy; and (5) variations among people. Of the five categories, the greatest source of conflict is the allocation of resources, whether human, natural, or institutional. Conflicts usually occur due to a combination of these sources. The probability of solving multicultural conflicts is greatly increased when the communicators are aware of the contributing factors. An appendix contains a statistical analysis of the Tolerance for Human Diversity Inventory, an instrument to measure interaction and tolerance of difference. The instrument itself is included. (Contains 61 references.) (Author/SLD)

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THE ETIOLOGY OF CONFLICT IN MULTICULTURAL RELATIONS

ED 383 813

Abstract

This paper focuses on the common sources or etiologies of conflict in multicultural contexts. Multicultural communication is the creation and sharing of meaning among citizens of the same geo-political system who belong to divergent tributary cultures. The sources of conflict in multicultural relations can be grouped into five broad categories. These categories include the allocation of resources; historical legacy; attitudinal interference; lack of cultural literacy; and variations among humans. Of the five categories the greatest source of conflict is the allocation of resources. The author included an instrument to measure attitudinal interference, the Tolerance for Human Diversity Inventory (Appendix A).

Running Head: Conflicts Among African and Korean Americans

Key Concepts: conflict, multicultural communication, African Americans, Korean Americans,

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THE ETIOLOGY OF CONFLICT IN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS

Abstract

This paper focuses on the common sources or etiologies of conflict in multicultural contexts. Multicultural communication is the creation and sharing of meaning among citizens of the same geo-political system who belong to divergent tributary cultures. The sources of conflict in multicultural relations can be grouped into five broad categories. These categories include the allocation of resources; historical legacy; attitudinal interference; lack of cultural literacy; and variations among humans. Of the five categories the most frequent source of conflict is the allocation of resources.

Introduction

Global Conflicts

Affiliated with the University of Chicago is an organization called the Educational Foundation for Nuclear Science. They publish the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. The editors and board of directors form a group nicknamed "the Dooms Day committee" which has been in existence since 1945. The committee monitors the stability of world governments, global conflicts and the proliferation of nuclear arms to determine how close the world is to nuclear armageddon. The period in which the world is closest to nuclear war is called midnight and the period when the world is farthest away is fifteen minutes until. Instability in the Middle East, interethnic wars in Eastern Europe, and continued civil war in many African nations have created 14 or more"hot spots" around the world such as in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia. World wide conflict is on the increase.

Multicultural Conflicts In The U.S.

Almost thirty years ago Martin Luther King Jr. in a sermon titled "A Knock on the Door at Midnight" said that it is "midnight in the psychological order, it is midnight in the social order, and it is midnight in the moral order" of America. He talked about increasing conflicts in the U.S. among blacks and whites (King, Jr circa 1963). Unfortunately, the situations that Dr. King spoke of thirty years ago have not improved, but worsened: the conflicts have proliferated. America is experiencing an increase in conflicts and hostilities among the various tributary groups. Anti-semitic incidents are increasing. The oppression of children is at an all time high. Gay bashing is on the rise and hostilities between men and women are becoming more acute. There is increasing strife among the poor and rich and among people across the colour spectrum including African and Korean Americans.

Tensions among African and Korean Americans have been highly visible. A Haitian woman was beaten by the manager and employees of Red Apple, a Korean owned store in New York: heavy rioting followed (Chang 1993). A Black child was shot in the back of the head for allegedly stealing a can of orange juice; the store owner who shot her was given 400 hundred hours of community service and a $500 fine. A nine year old Korean girl was shot by an African American robber as she hid in the back room of her family's store (Aubry 1993).

A store owner, Haeng Kim, had a group of Black by-standers to a drive-by shooting rush into his store. He responded by shooting into the crowd and wounding one man in the stomach (Jones 1991). In the nation's capitol two young African American robbers shot to death a Korean store owner, Mu Rim Hong, (Hurt 1994). And after the first Rodney King verdict Black rioters in Los Angeles concentrated their fury on Korean owned stores in black districts (Awanohara & Hoon 1992). People everywhere are wondering exactly what the conflicts are about and why they cannot be solved.

Rationale

The process of resolving, solving and managing problems and conflicts is complex (Rothwell 1992; Galanes & Brilhart 1991; Cragan & Wright 1986; Brilhart & Galanes 1989; Lumsden & Lumsden 1993; and Johnson & Johnson 1991). "A problem is a discrepancy or difference between an actual state of affairs and a desired state of affairs" (Johnson and Johnson 1991 238). When there is a discrepancy or difference between an actual state of affairs and the desired state of affairs struggles arise among individuals and groups. These resulting struggles can be defined as conflict. In order to manage conflicts problems must be solved and that is something that is difficult to do. From a communication perspective, that is the stage at which people actually sit down to talk about the conflict, one of the greatest barriers to effective management and solution development is the framing of the problem.

Framing a problem has to do with describing and analyzing the conflictual situation in such a way that the groups involved come to a common understanding of what is unsatisfactory, what is desired and what obstacles exist (Galanes and Brilhart 1991)."Defining a workable problem is often the hardest stage of the problem-solving process"(Johnson and Johnson 1991 238). Four major obstructions to this process is the failure to frame the problem, the tendency to prematurely frame the problem, unclear and ambiguous framing of the problem, and failure to reach consensus about terminology in the framework of the problem (Rothwell 1992; Galanes and Brilhart 1991; Cragan 1986; Brilhart and Galanes 1989; and Johnson and Johnson 1991).

Furthermore, the parties involved in a conflict often fail to understand the sources of the problems causing the conflict and they fail to discern the difference among primary, secondary and tertiary sources. When the sources of problems are not accurately identified and ordered it is very easy to engage in protracted

conflicts about issues that are not at the center of the situation.

For example among African and Korean Americans many conflicts have been blamed on differences in cultures and communication styles. However I would suggest that the primary source of conflict among African and Korean Americans in the inner city is the allocation of resources. The major issue is who controls the economic life of the community. Koreans own many more businesses in the black community than African Americans and the Korean businesses are family run. Therefore, they control more money and jobs in the inner city than African Americans. Culture variations is not the primary source of conflict among African and Korean Americans.

Frequently groups fail to resolve and/or effectively manage conflicts because they have failed to properly identify the sources of the conflict. The following sections of this essay will address the nature of multicultural communication; the nature of conflict, sources of conflict; and a hierarchy of sources. The goal is to aid in the framing of problems in order that conflicts can be more effectively analyzed and solved.

The Nature of Multicultural Communication

Multicultural communication is essentially what happens in a culturally diverse nation. It can be defined as the creating and sharing of meaning among people who are members of the same geo-political system, and who also hold membership in one or more of the system's tributary groups (Byrd, 1993). In other words the people who are talking hold dual membership in the over arching general culture and in a tributary culture.

Culture is defined as the traditions, values, language(s), artifacts, philosophy, methods of thinking, methods of communicating, and world perspective of a people (Verma & Bagley 1984 146; Singer 1987 6). The mainstream or general culture is usually dominated by the language, values, thinking processes, and so forth of the power dominant group, but is also influenced by less powerful groups within the country.

A tributary culture is a group of people who are distinguishable from the general population and/or power dominant on the basis of racial characteristics, ethnic heritage, religious beliefs, gender identification, sexual orientation, socioeconomic level, age, and/or ableness. Tributary cultures influence the mainstream historically, socially, economically, and politically (Byrd 1993).

Power dominant groups are those people who control the major institutions of a society such as schools, government, economic institutions, the military, medical and social service delivery systems and the media. They are important not because of who they are but because of what they do. The mainstream culture is a combination of the cultures of the power dominant group and the various tributary groups merging together in a grand cultural basin to create the "larger society".

Initially the concept of multicultural communication was

defined as the creation and sharing of meaning among people belonging to the same geo-political system and also to tributary groups within the system. Based on this definition when women talk to men, adults to children, middle aged to the elderly, hetero-sexual to homosexual, abled to differently abled, poor to rich, power dominant to the disenfranchised, African Americans to Korean Americans then multicultural communication has taken place.

Though all of these people share a common culture there are variances in their socialization, ways of thinking, use of language, experiential bases, values, and other cultural characteristics that cause them to be strangers to each other. While there are similarities among African and Korean Americans stemming from the general cultural which they share there are also differences based on membership in their respective racio-ethnic groups. Therefore while they are familiar with each other they are also 'strangers'.

> Strangers represent both the idea of nearness in that they are physically close and the idea of remoteness in that they have different values and ways of doing things. Strangers are physically present and participating in a situation and at the same time are outside the situation because they are from a different place.(Gudykunst and Kim 1992 19)

This paper explores the sources of conflict among 'strangers at home'.

The Nature of Conflict

Conflict can be defined as a struggle among interdependent parties over differences in values and/or resources that are actually scarce or appear to be scarce (Borisoff & Victor 1989 1-3; Broome 1990 114). A resource is anything of value, something that people want, need or think they want or need (Byrd 1993).

"Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. The Incompatible actions may originate in one person... or they may reflect incompatible action of two of more persons" (Deutsch 1969 8). From a communication standpoint conflict is "a form of intense interpersonal and/or intrapersonal dissonance (tension or antagonism) between two or more interdependent parties based on incompatible goals, needs, desires, values beliefs, and/or attitudes" (Ting-Toomey 1985 72). It is "an interaction that occurs between individuals when salient values or self-interests are threatened or challenged (Waln 1982 557). Conflict is evidenced in the spoken and behavioral patterns of the individuals or groups involved.

Most Americans are taught that conflict should be avoided. They are admonished to walk away from it, turn the other cheek, ignore it. In many families overt signs of conflict such as arguing, raising one's voice, and physical fighting are considered negative. The fact of the matter is that conflict, in and of itself, is not negative. It is unmanaged conflict that becomes destructive. When conflict is managed effectively it has several

advantages including increasing motivation, creativity and energy. Conflict can also bring about better ideas because more information is brought to light and discussion among those in conflict can bring about creative solutions. In fact, "conflict appears to be an indispensable element of American culture" (Semlak 1982 1).

There are certain conflicts that are culturally ingrained in American society due to the organization of the government with checks and balances. Within the political, legal, economic, and religious contexts conflict is a natural phenomenon and is inevitable in any setting where the members or participants are interdependent.

The type of conflict of concern here is that which is unmanaged and therefore has become destructive. The difference between constructive and destructive conflict is duration, intensity, and consequences. When the duration and intensity of the conflict interferes with effective multicultural relations and the consequences are loss of life and property, the reduction of human potential and the demise of the productivity of society then the conflict has become destructive.

Categories of Multicultural Conflict

After a review of the pertinent literature it is apparent that the sources of conflict can be grouped into five broad categories: the allocation of resources, attitudinal interference, variance among humans, inheritance and the lack of cultural knowledge.

Allocation of Resources

As stated earlier, a resource is anything that people need or want, or think need or want. Resources can actually be scarce or only appear to be scarce. All resources are divided (allocated) among the various groups belonging to one geo-political system (Landis and Boucher 1987). The four types of resources include power, natural resources, systems or institutions, and people.

At the top of the list of resources is power-the ability to influence or control. Influence or control can be exercised over people, objects, processes, institutions, systems and natural resources. Power can be obtained in several ways. There is power based on krowledge, information, and expertise. Power can stem from organizational structure such as that which is inherent in a position i.e. the presidency. Monetary wealth can bring power and so can physical strength. In general the ability to dispense rewards and punishments brings power(Emmert and Donaghy 1981 244; Beebe and Masterson 1989 24; and Pennington 1989 261). Power is one of those resources that is treated as though it is scarce when in fact it is not. People can amass power through a number of means, but most often they demand that someone give it to them.

Just as there are conflicts between power dominant and disempowered groups, there are also conflicts between various and within disempowered groups. According to the San Jose Mercury News two groups of people were denied the right to march in the St.

Patrick's Day parade, gays who identified themselves as Irish and wheelchair bound children (1991). So even within the Irish community, a group that has experienced its own share of oppression and discrimination they discriminated against other Irishmen because of their sexual orientation and ableness.

Conflicts among disempowered groups can also stem from a need to displace the burden of their own oppression. Because oppressed people suffer so greatly from the loss of power and the loss of self-esteem they often displace their oppression by oppressing other people. They most often elevate themselves by expressing feeling of superiority and responding negatively to groups who are different.

Blacks refuse to enter coalitions that include gays due to homonegativity and gays segregate themselves on the basis of race. There are some poor whites vested in the notion that blacks are inferior and most middle & upper class Americans stay as far away as they can from the homeless. In some areas Hispanics disassociate themselves from people of colour and everywhere there are abled people who consider themselves superior to the differently abled. Too often children are punished because they cannot act and think like adults. Each group wants to feel that it is superior to all other groups while they all suffer similar oppressive conditions. Disempowered groups allow the struggle for power among themselves to become a barrier to effective communication that aids in the building of coalitions. Due to this intergroup struggle they all continue to forfeit the power they seek.

A second type of resource is natural. This would include those items necessary for physical survival such as water, food, land, and air. Over the past twenty years a tense battle has been waged in the courts and the media over smoking. The basic issue is which is the more fundamental right: the right of the individual to smoke or the right of the majority to have clean air. Smokers and non-smokers have a conflict over a natural resource, clean air.

In city after city, local governments struggle with the issue of where to build low income housing in order to break the cycle of poverty. People in middle class neighborhoods say they don't want low income housing in their neighborhoods and so the conflict between classes is fought over the resource of land.

Natural resources also include those basic items needed to run the industrial-technological complex including oil, diamonds, gas, wood, paper, tin, copper, etc. These resources are provided to us by the eco-system and are used as primary products and to produce other products. The ability to make decisions about the use of resources in a society is an issue that generates conflict in multicultural relations. Native Americans in some states are under siege to give up lands on their reservations which sit on oil and coal (Chehak & Harjo 1990 22). The Native Americans "own" the resources and other groups want them (state governments and oil corporations).

A third type of resource would be the major institutions within a society and access to them (Young 1990 73-74). Access to these institutions is important because they directly impact on the

quality of life and one's ability to participate in society. The major institutions within our society would include the following: media: radio, television, newspapers; schools; social service delivery system; government/politics; hospitals and medical care facilities; employment; social organizations; judicial system; military; and religious. All of these institutions provide goods and services which enhance the quality of life. Those groups who dominate the major institutions of a society and make decisions about who has access to them are power dominant.

The last type of resource to be discussed is people. People are included as a resource, not in terms of how they can be used, but in terms of the impact they have as an aggregate. People work, populate the land, utilize resources and their numbers translate into political power. By the year 2010 the baby boomers of the 40's and 50's will be fifty and sixty years old. This means a major shift from a youth oriented culture to one preoccupied with aging. One conflict which has already been predicted will be between retirees and workers contributing to the tax base. The conflict will envelop not just people of different generations, but also people of different racial backgrounds.

For example, it is expected that in the 21st century there will be conflicts between the rising number of retirees and the dwindling number of workers who must be taxed to pay for the elders' Social Security benefits. The conflict will be compounded by the fact that a large majority of recipients will be white, whereas a majority of workers paying for them will be nonwhite (Lacayo 1990; O'Rourke 1990;).

The changes in the balance of the population from young to elderly, from whites to people of colour will change the power balance in the country. The fear of this change in the balance of power is already creating racial conflict and unrest across the country.

People, as a resource, are so important that at various times in American history sterilization programs have been implemented among some racial and ethnic groups, while genocide was practiced on others (Weisbord, 1975; Ehle, 1988). All this was in an attempt to control or reduce the population of unwanted groups of people.

> Compulsory sterilization also has a long history in the United States, with the focus on the mentally retarded, prison inmates and ethnic minorities. (Weisbord, 1975, pg. 24)

A systematic program of "voluntary" sterilization was developed in Puerto Rico in the early 40's, by the United States, to reduce the Puerto Rican population. By 1968 a full one-third of the women of childbearing age had been sterilized (Weisbord, 1975, pg. 232).

The proportion of a total population which can be claimed by any one group represents a power base and therefore influences political decisions and the allocation of resources. Black and

Hispanic leaders understood this fact and therefore waged media campaigns to urge their people to be counted in the 1990 census. Those who were concerned with homeless issues were also watching the census count because they questioned the ability of the federal government to actually count the homeless. An under count would mean a drastic lack of funding for an ever growing problem. The concern of all tributary cultures to be counted accurately attests to the power of people in the aggregate.

Human Variations

A second major source of conflict in multicultural communication is variations among humans. Groups of people vary on the basis of language, values, traditions, world view, methods of thinking, laws, etc. of a group of people. These variations among people can be the source of conflict within a nation. There are several areas of group characteristics where variance causes conflict. In the book Conflict Management (Borisoff and Victor 1989) these aspects are discussed. They include language, place, thought processing, and nonverbal communication.

Physical Appearance

Variations in physical appearance is always an issue among humans. Though all people, regardless of race, are obviously of the same species and display only minor variations in skin colour, hair types, and body builds, they insist on attaching social meaning to these differences (Alvarado 1995 A1; Landis and Boucher 1987). These physiological variations can be traced to minor evolutionary changes that have occurred due to variations in geography, climate, and diet (Alvarado 1995 A; Jordan and Reentry 1976). People insist that these differences are meaningful because it allows them to (1) feel superior,(2) justify xenophobia, (3) justify the degradation, dehumanization and subjugation of others, and (3) divide and conquer.

Language

Language factors deal with variance in language behavior and attitudes towards language behavior. People belonging to the same geo-political system share a common language, use variations of that common language, and in many instances also speak different languages. Conflicts occur when groups speaking the same common language exhibit variations in syntax, phonology and deep structural meaning.

In every geo-political system where there are different languages and dialects spoken there is constant disagreement about language and language policy. There is constant maneuvering to make one language dominant by law. Presently French speaking Canadians are threatening to split the country. While there are issues other than language that divide the country Francophones and Anglophones are grouped along language lines.

Several bills have been introduced in the U.S. Congress with the intent of making English the official language of the government. The two groups that are most vocal against this type of legislation are Latinos and blacks. Latinos resist language restrictive legislation because they speak Spanish as a first language. African Americans resist it because they speak a dialect of General English which conceivably could be construed to be something other than General English. The attempts to force other people to speak like the power dominant group is one way of flexing strength and showing superiority. Conflicts also occur when members of the power dominant group feel so insecure about themselves that they insist that everyone speak the language that they speak. It is in the educational and employment arenas that the most intense conflicts over language occur.

Place

A third aspect of human cultures over which there is conflict is the treatment of place. Place is defined as having to do with (1) the physical environment in which one lives and (b) existing technology, or the way in which one manipulates the environment. (Borisoff and Victor 1989 130). The manner in which people use resources, relate to technology and manipulate their environment differs from culture to culture.

An example occurred in Castro Valley, CA. A Chinese optometrist opened an office in Castro Valley, in a building which she purchased. Before moving into the building she consulted a feng shui. In the Chinese culture the feng shui is a person who gives advice about many things such as the color of a building and the placement of furniture to bring good fortune or keep away evil. The feng shui advised Dr. Lin to paint her building purple and orange. Residents of Castro Valley went to the city council to determine if there was an ordinance that could be used to force Dr. Lin to change the appearance of her building. Failing to find such as ordinance they attempted to write and enact one. While in the process they also picketed the office. On picketer said on the evening news," This is not Chinatown, they need to stay over in Chinatown." Dr. Lin, quite the diplomat, decided to conduct a survey of the community and let them determine what colors the building should be. This was an example of conflict over place.

The January/February (1990) issue of Environmental Action was devoted to conflicts between whites and people of colour over environmental issues. In general

> Blacks, Native American, Chicano, Hispanic--social justice advocates in all these communities are fighting so their people may live and work free of debilitating pollution...Yet the national environmental groups are undeniably white in leadership, staff and image. And activism against environmental threats--grassroots, regional, national--is often divided, by culture and habits of oppression, along ethnic lines. (19)

The inherent harm in having an environmental protection movement that is led and staffed primarily by any one racial or ethnic group is that the perspective will be limited and will only take into account that which is environmentally good for the group in control. That leaves out everyone else.

Jurisdictional Ambiguity

Jurisdictional ambiguity occurs when two or more individuals or groups feel that they have a legal right over a particular resource such as land, people, or institutions. There is a dispute concerning who has authority over the resource. An unfortunate example of conflict growing out of judicial ambiguity is the conflict among Israelites and Palestinians. The Israeli feel that they have a right to occupy Jerusalem based on biblical sources which they say identifies Israel as the land God promised to them ,the 'chosen people'. The Palestinians feel they have jurisdiction over Jerusalem because it lies within the boundaries of their country as stipulated in the British mandate for Palestine written after World War I (Israel 1992).

There has been fighting and war among the Israeli and Palestinians since 1948. This is when the United Nations created Israel and identified it as the homeland of the Jews. Awarding the right to govern and occupy Israel to Jewish people even though it was part of Palestine was one facet of the settlement among First World nations after World War II. They divided the resources of Third World nations among the victors of the war. Forty-six years later Israelis and Palestinians continue to be locked in a fierce battle for the land (Horan 1995).

On the continental U.S. a dispute over land ownership has caused conflict among the Navajo and Hopi people. This conflict began in the 1820's when the Navajo began raiding Hopi lands and continued even after a Hopi reservation was established in 1882 (Hopi 1992). Today this long running dispute has been dubbed the forest land give away and the national forest sellout (Hopps 1993; Williamson 1993). It appears that the two tribes may be settling the conflict based on court decisions that include releasing land from the national forest reserve. This comes after years of fighting in and out of court (Benedek 1993).

Both the conflict between Israeli and Palestinians and the conflict between Navajo and Hopi stem from two sources; inheritance and jurisdictional ambiguity.

Thought Processing

Differences in thought processing is a fourth variation in human cultures. It is defined it "the way in which people interpret the world around them" (Borisoff and Victor 1989 135). Every individual has a psychological filter which shapes the way she perceives the world, determines her behavior, and shapes each message that she sends and receives. Ways of thinking are

determined by the culture, past experience, formal training, informal experiences, expectations of the future, attitudinal systems, and demographic characteristics such as ability and age. Multicultural conflict can occur when ways of thinking or thought processing between groups or individuals is very different.

An example of problems which occur in the multicultural setting due to differences among tributary groups is youth negativity. Youth negativity can be evidenced in the belief that children should be able to think like adults and when they don't they are being willfully disobedient and must be punished. Very often in families serious difficulty occur because parents want and expect their children to think and act just like them. However, children think differently from adults because they do not have the same experiential base, nor the same reasoning tools to think the way adults do. Too frequently children are punished for thinking like children.

Unfortunately, often, when individuals or groups from various tributary cultures talk they fail to realize that everyone does not think the same way and that those differences must be recognized and taken into account.

Nonverbal Behavior

Another aspect of human behavior where variations cause conflict is nonverbal behavior and the interpretation of it (Borisoff and Victor 1989 150). Nonverbal behavior includes all communication behavior other than words. That means proxemics (space), kinesics (movement and gestures), facial expression, eye contact, para-linguistics (volume, pitch, rate, articulation, pauses), touch (pressure on the skin), artifacts and objects, and environment (living space, arrangement, of furnishings, and decorations, etc). Nonverbal behavior is culture specific which means that it changes from culture to culture and cannot be properly interpreted outside the context of that culture. This definition is applicable to tributary cultures also. Variance in the way people talk, how they move, the manner in which they dress and the arrangement of their living space can be the source of conflict among tributary cultures.

Even something which seems so inconsequential as body and facial hair can cause intense multicultural conflict resulting in legal battles and sometimes death! During the late 60's, when social unrest was pervasive in American society, many community battles and court cases were fought over the length of hair that male students could wear and the wearing of facial hair. Because people under the age of 18 are considered children many of their individual rights are challenged and protections denied. Adults as a group, tend to deny children the right to make many decisions that they are capable of making. Children represent one class of citizen over which most people can exercise some measure of power. One manifestation of power is the ability to make choices about personal appearance for someone else. Historically, adults (parents, guardians and school officials) have had absolute power

to make choices about the personal appearance of children. However, after 1966 children began to challenge that practice.

> Nothing is more startling in the history of student rights litigation than the explosion of dress and hair cases...The outburst of hair cases came between 1969 and 1973. (Friedman 1982 15)

At the core of these court cases was the issue of who had the right to determine the appearance of a minor, the child or adults. These conflictual situations over hair length really constituted a conflict over power. Conflicts over hair length and fuzz on a teenager's face cost thousands of taxpayer dollars and tied up many court dockets (Friedman 1982).

In People Magazine (1990) an article appeared about a young man (eight years old) who had been isolated from the rest of the student body, taught in a separate building, and denied the opportunity to play with his classmates at recess because he refused to cut the tail of hair growing down his back. The school decided to implement a dress code and hair down the back was no longer permissible. This child did not want to cut his hair and his parents supported him. The young man's parents reported that he was suffering emotional problems from the isolation the school had imposed on him just because he refused to cut his hair. And this type of oppression was being perpetrated by educators whose responsibility was to facilitate the development of potential in children.

From around the world another story of hostility over the symbolism of hair occurred (Dickey and Iss, 1987). As part of the effort to show their power in West Beirut, Syrian troops "used razor blades along with rifles and tanks" to influence the behavior of young Lebanese. Young men who continued to wear their beards had I.D.s confiscated and therefore had their movements restricted in Beirut. In order to get the I.D.s back they had to shave.

> Others fear the consequences of going unshaven could be far worse: since the Syrians arrived, dozens of corpses have turned up around town.(Dickey and Iss 1987 47)

Hair, what it symbolizes and how it is to be interpreted, often provides a surface issue over which competing tributary cultures disagree, when the underlying issue is the allocation of power. The examples of conflict over nonverbal behaviors and the interpretation of them are endless. While variations in nonverbal behaviors seem to be relatively unimportant on the scale of world problems serious conflicts among tributary groups do occur because of them.

Styles of Conflict Resolution

The last variations among humans to be discussed is styles of

conflict resolution. Just as people from different nations handle conflict in a host of ways so do people within a nation (Landis and Boucher 1987 119-123). Among the Navajo conflicts among family members and within communities are settled by an "arbitrator" and a council of community members who know all of the individuals concerned. These people sit down and talk the situation through to come to a workable solution. In the general American culture even family disputes are sometimes adjudicated in courts by impartial judges who are disconnected from the community and the situation. In the Navajo tribe the "arbitrator" is conscious of the impact of his decision on the family and the community (Winds of Change 1990).

In the general culture the judge is most concerned with punishment. The general culture would have a dispute resolved by an impartial judge while the Navajo would have a dispute resolved by a person who had previous knowledge of the people and situation. This difference in handling conflicts would cause problems between the tributary culture and the general culture.

Personality Types

Personality consists of the lear.ed, enduring, tendency to display certain patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving, and knowing (Seelye 1993). These patterns can be associated with a particular individual (unique) or group (generalized) (Albert and Triandis 1991). Patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving, and knowing distinguish one individual from another and one group from another. Cultural characteristics such as language, experiences, religions, worldviews, and values tend to shape the human personality. American culture tends to produce individuals who are inquisitive, rights oriented, assertive and talkative. Japanese culture tends to produce individuals who are other oriented, effective listeners, value silence over talk, and strive to preserve harmony in relationships. These personality differences could produce conflicts particularly at the interpersonal le6el.

Albert and Triandis speak to this issue in an essay on critical issues for intercultural education.

> Studies of peoples who subsist through hunting and fishing...have shown that members of these groups develop highly differentiated perceptual and cognitive style ...and a personality that is characterized by independence, self-reliance, little affect, and poor interpersonal skills. (1991 412)

On the other hand agricultu2al societies such as the Temne produce people who "develop less differentiated perceptual and cognitive styles" with personalities characterized by much affect, interdependence, reliance on others, and good interpersonal skills. (Albert and Triandis 1991 412)

The point of this discussion is that various ethno-racial and geo-cultural groups tend to produce people with distinct

personality styles. There are times when the divergent patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving, and knowing can cause conflicts. This can be seen in the physically integrated classrooms of the U.S. where 95% of the teachers are of European descent and 30% of the children are students of colour and ethnic minorities (Cooper 1989). African American children tend to be assertive, vocal, highly expressive, and more productive in field dependent learning situations. Euro-American teachers tend to reward students who are acquiescent, moderate in expressiveness, learn well in the written form, and field independent learners. This deference in personality types often results in producing high numbers of students of colour who are "at risk".

I have first hand experience to support this notion. In the first seven years of my educational career I was in all Black classrooms, K-6. In these classrooms where my instructors were African American, my personality type, which is assertive, talkative, inquisitive, expressive, and extremely independent, was highly valued and rewarded. Moving to a physically integrated school setting with mixed classrooms and virtually all white teachers I fou.d at 14 that some of my instructors were intimidated, dumbstruck over the fact that I was smart, and determined to show me that they were more powerful. They did not know how to respond to my African American personality in the classroom. This results in a few classroom conflicts over the years.

Inherited Conflict

So far the sources of conflict discussed have been the allocation of resources and variations among humans. There is a t(ird source of conflict in multicultural societies and that is inheritance. Throughout the nation and the world groups of people inherit conflicts. At some point there is an initial struggle or clash. For example, new immigrants moving into a ghetto that was previously occupied by other immigrants or people holding colonial status within the U.S. i.e African Americans. Italians moving into neighborhoods previously occupied by Jews, Latinos moving into neighborhoods previously occupied by blacks, this is the pattern of ghettoization. During the transition periods disagreements usually arise over cultural differences and financial domination of the neighborhood, such as between African and Korean Americans. So the disagreements begin and somehow never end. People teach their children to hate the other group. They learn to interact with each other only in destructive and/or violent modes. The distrust, dislike, and dissention become ingrained in the way the groups relate and they become trapped in a spiraling cycle of conflict. The conflicts become part of the group identity.

Here is an example of inherited conflict that has become central to an individuals ethnic identity. In answer to the question " What are the advantages of being Serbian" this young man living in the U.S. answered:

> We have the greatest history in Europe actually, well a little bit smaller than the Roman Empire, but always fighting and that's why in our blood is to be really good fighters and really good warriors... and if they touch, if someb/dy touches us, then we will attack, and then we are going to win...(Interview 1995)

When asked to define what it means to be Serbian the young man went on to say:

> For me, I'm really proud to be Serbian, even after long time of being ashamed because nobody else was, and everybody was talking bad about them. Now and earlier I felt really proud for being a Serbian and I always tell everyone that I am Serbian...But Serbian is a big strong solider standing on a high mountain, protecting his own ground. That's what I define as Serbian. (Interview 1995)

When inherited conflicts become central to the identities of conflicting groups then all future interactions between them are exacerbated by historical baggage.

Historical baggage is the series of negative incidents between or among groups of people which punctuate their relationships around which there debilitative emotions (Byrd 1993). Punctuate means that these incidents are deemed significant in the history of the group. Those events that are most memorable are usually negative. They are labeled "baggage" because they are wrapped in debilitative emotions which hamper current multicultural relations. Oppressed groups keep the memory of negative historical incidents alive and use them to guide future interactions with power dominant groups.

Historical baggage differs from 'history' in the impact that it has on the listener. Historical baggage is shrouded in debilitative emotions and dysfunctional coping strategies which hinder positive multicultural relations. History is the sharing of information about the past so that understanding, positive self-concept, and effective multicultural relations occur (Byrd 1993).

In the past ten years a number of violent acts have been committed in Vietnamese communities here in America. A few Vietnamese have been harassing and killing other Vietnamese because the other was a sympathizer with or worked for the Communists, before the United Stat%s terminated its police action in Southeast Asia. In effect the perpetrators of the violence are continuing the Vietnamese War and causing destruction among their /wn people. They have allowed their emotions about the War to become debilitative.

Native Americans may have a basic distrust of whites and be wary when negotiating with them because the federal government has historically made contracts and treaties with Native Americans that were not honored. Some African American women, when making political coalitions with Caucasian women, keep in mind the betrayal their great-grandmothers suffered from their coalition

with white women for suffrage. Black women were recruited heavily to speak on behalf of women's voting rights and to organize to bring it to fruition. Yet, when voting rights were granted to women they were not granted to black women. These conflicts spiral through time and take on a life of their own. Hence conflicts are inherited from generation to the next.

Sometimes tributary cultures are reluctant to let go of historical baggage for fear that if they forget where they have been they may find themselves going down the same road again. While the practice of transferring historical baggage from one gen%ration to the next serves to keep alive important group memories it may also serve to keep alive debilitative emotions and dysfunctional coping strategies which might hamper multicultural relations today and in the future.

Attitudinal Interference

The fourth category of sources conflict is attitudinal interference. An attitudinal system, in general, refers to ways of thinking about and responding to stimuli (one category of which is people). Ways of thinking about people which lead to discrimination, reduction of human potential and choice, the blocking of interactions, dehumanization, and harm could be considered attitudinal interference. Many "isms" and phobias fit here such as racism, sexism, religious intolerance, ethnocentrism, gerontophobi!, ableism, classism, and homonegativity. A concept that I would at to this list would be youth negativity, the notion that there are people who do not like, are afraid of, and are intolerant of children and young people (Byrd 1993).

These "isms" can be grouped under the broad umbrella term of intolerance for human diversity (Byrd 1995). Intolerance for human diversity is the tendency to oppress, discriminate against, and respond negatively to others. It can be measured by the direction and intensity of response to variances in demographic characteristics (see Appendix A for Tolerance for Human Diversity Inventory).

Types of Intolerance

I would hypothesize that there are four types of intolerance: cultural, trait, situational, and target (Byrd 1993). Cultural intolerance grows out of the very fabric of society. Individuals and groups may be intolerant because they are taught to be so. America is a society that propagates intolerance of people of colour, women, children, and the differently abled. This intolerance is institutionalized through policies and taught person to person. Communicators exhibiting cultural intolerance do so because it jibes with the prevailing cultural mores and thinking.

Trait intolerance is a pervasive tendency to respond negatively to anyone who is different from self (Byrd 1993). Trait intolerance tends to be fixed, like a personality variable. It could be linked to the inability to tolerate ambiguity.

Situational intolerance occurs when a person finds himself in surroundings where those around him are expressing intolerance through their words and/or actions even though the individual may not agree with the intolerant attitudes (Byrd 1993). Peer pressure, groupthink, or simply the need to be accepted may cause a person to behave in an intolerant manner. This could be explained by the social judgement theory (Littlejohn 1993).

Target intolerance grows out the human tendency to over generalize. An individual has a negative experience with another person. For example a thin child harasses an overweight child about being fat. The overweight child generalizes his negative response to the one thin child to all thin people. With target intolerance a person takes a legitimate negative response to one individual and generalizes that response to all people in that category.

It is possible then that the phenomena of intolerance to human diversity can be grouped into four types: cultural, trait, situational, and target. Perhaps at a future date these types can be detected and measured.

Suspension of Ethics

As a result of intolerance for diversity, the belief that people who are different from self are not quite human, and due to the dehumanization and devaluation of those who are different ethical guidelines are often suspended in multicultural interactions.

Communication in every society is governed by ethical standards. These rules or guidelines for human interaction are usually implied in our behavior rather than discussed explicitly. Ethics are "the moral principles governing communication; the right-wrong, moral-immoral dimension of communication" (DeVito, 1989, pg.92).

Multicultural communication brings with it special problems in ethics because while the people involved belong to the same general culture or society, they also belong to various tributary cultures and often are taught one set of guidelines for communicating with people like themselves (in-group) and another for communicating with people different from themselves (out-group)(Bowser and Hunt 1981 76). What results is an uneven application of ethical standards.

When encounters between people belonging to the same tributary culture take place (in-group) "communicants employ symbols with some consistency, but more importantly they share a system of rules governing such encounters" (Barnland 1978 9). However when encounters involving people belonging to different tributary c5ltures of the same society occur, these rules may be altered or suspended. The rules are altered because we are taught and socialized to dehumanize and devalue those who are not like us and to communicate with them in ways that we would not use with people who are like us. "Psychic and social injury may result from" talking to each other in ways that are demoralizing, dehumanizing and restrictive to human potential (Barnland 1978 9).

The Lack of Cultural Knowledge

The lack of cultural is often cited as a source of multicultural conflict. In the absence of cultural knowledge multicultural relationships are mired in historical baggage rather than grounded in history. Having little or no knowledge of the major tributary groups within one's culture is a double edged sword. Not only do Americans lack knowledge of other groups of people within the society, they also lack knowledge of themselves. This lack of knowledge and appreciation of self and others often results in conflicts.

Just as the lack of knowledge about one's own culture can cause multicultural conflicts so can the lack of knowledge of other tributary groups within one's society. The failure to understand the history, traditions and culture of another people results in the inability to engage in perspective taking. Perspective taking is the ability to mentally put one's self in someone else's place and try to see the world from their perspective. It is difficult to do that if one know nothing about what shaped the other person.

The lack of knowledge of other tributary cultures leads to negative stereotyping and the erroneous assumption that people are all the same or they are all radically different, when the truth is somewhere in between. There are some similarities spanning all cultures because we are all humans. And yet there are vast differences among groups of people due primarily to differences in experiences.

Hierarchy of Sources of Conflict

While much of the research on multicultural communication centers on differences and similarities among the communication styles and ways of perceiving the various tributary groups I would suggest that these differences are not the major contributors to multicultural conflict. At the center of most conflicts in the multicultural context is the question of power. Who should have the ability to control, influence and make decisions. When this primary issue is ignored most often attempts at problem solving are not successful. The sharing of power has been identified as the prime genitor of multicultural conflict because when one group gathers enough power to control or influence other groups then ten3ions over other issues such as language difference, dress and customs are automatically suppressed in favor of the power dominant group.

For example people complain about language differences in this country, but the people who complain the loudest are members of the power dominant group. And those power dominant people seem to fear most the loss of power as citizens who speak English as a second language increase in population. The common language or only language issue is given increased credence when the power dominant group feels that another group may challenge their authority. Diversity over language has a long history in this country which parallels surges of immigrants into the continental U.S. or

instances when the country has added blocks of people to the population that spoke languages other than English. Two examples are the Louisiana purchase and the addition of the Southwest Territory to the continental U.S. At each instance people speaking a language other than English were made citizens of the country and English speaking people felt threatened. At those points attempts were made to establish by law English as the official language. The point is that the language differences become a problem only when the power dominant group is fearful of losing control or power.

The second most important contributor to multicultural conflict is attitudinal interference. Because of attitudinal interference growing out of intolerance for human diversity variations and the human tendency to organize sensory data into arbitrary categories variations among tributary groups become much more important than they really are. Variance in skin color, hair texture, age, ableness become significant only because humans attribute a great deal of importance to them. And humans attribute importance to demographic differences because of negative attitudes towards those who are different. When attitudinal barriers are reduced the acceptance of differences in others increases.

Not far behind attit5dinal interference is inheritance, the intergroup conflicts that are passed on from generation to generation. The conflicts that people inherit from past generations are difficult to manage and solve because they become part of the group identity and a way of life. These kinds of conflicts can be solved because people can change, but they must want to.

The lack of cultural literacy is fourth among the contributors to multicultural conflict. The fact that most of us know little or nothing about our own cultural heritage and even less about the culture of other tributary groups within the United States reduces our ability to function effectively in multicultural settings. When a communicator lacks self-understanding and has no real knowledge of the "other" in the communicative event the possibility for conflicts is greatly increased.

Variations among humans would be the fifth or least important source of conflict in multicultural settings. I list it as the least important because the other four sources the allocation of resources, attitudinal interference, and the lack of cultural literacy lead to the tendency to overreact to human differences. Variance in language, dress, custom, values, etc, would become much more tolerated if the questions of the allocation of power, attitudinal interference, inheritance, and lack of cultural literacy were not imbedded in the foundations of multicultural conflicts. When groups become willing to share power, change their negative attitudes, find solutions to their inherited conflicts and learn more about each other then differences among groups can become strengths rather than weakness in multicultural interactions.

Summary

This author has focused on five broad sources of conflict including the allocation of resources, variations among humans,

inheritance, attitudinal interference, and the lack of cultural knowledge. Resources include power, natural, human, and institutions or systems. Variations in among humans include differences in language, dress, traditions, ways of thinking, laws, etc. The section on attitudinal interference dealt with phenomenon such as racism, sexism, ageism, and economic elitism. The lack of knowledge included the lack of knowledge of self and others. Historical legacy incorporates those conflict that are inherited. No conflictual situation can be attributed to just one source.

The five sources of conflict can be arranged in a hierarchy as they contribute to conflictual situations with the allocation of resources as the basic issue, attitudinal interference a secondary contributor, legacy as the third contributor, the lack of cultural literacy a fourth consideration and human differences the fifth contributor. Conflicts usually occur due to some combination of these sources rather than a single one. Because conflicts usually stem from more than one source they tend to be complex and difficult to manage and/or solve. The probability of solving multicultural conflicts is greatly increased when the communicators are aware of those factors that most frequently contribute to conflict situations in the multicultural context.

In the upcoming papers the authors will present evidence which supports the notion that the conflicts among African and Korean Americans in the inner cities can be traced to a combination of the five sources identified in this paper. Ms. Lien will talk about the immigration patterns of Korean Americans, MR. Washington will address the colonial status of African Americans, and Ms. Chiu will summarize specific conflicts and present six axioms to explain the problems.

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Appendix A

Statistical Analysis of the Tolerance for Human Diversity Inventory

This instrument contains two scales, one measuring patterns of interaction and the other measuring tolerance for various groups of citizens in the United States (Figure 1). Items 1-8 measured participants' interaction with various groups of people. The answer choices were yes or no. Theoretically, the scores on patterns of interaction range from 0-32.

The second scale, Tolerance, (9-50) contains 42 items designed to gauge the participant's response to people identifiable by ableness, race, religion, socioeconomic level, sexual orientation, gender, and age. The forty-two items represent highly generalized, frequently used stereotypes and folk sayings about the various groups responded to. These statements were taken from the domain of statements made by students in class discussions and by participants in professional seminars dealing with diversity issues.

The Tolerance scale had a mean = 148, SD = 18. Moderate scores fell in the range of 131-166, high above 166, low below 131. The higher the score the greater tolerance for diversity with the lower scores indicating less tolerance.

Results from a factor analysis indicated that five constructs constitute the tolerance for diversity concept (Byrd 1991). From the initial analysis tolerance for human diversity apparently is a multidimensional concept. The factor analysis of the THDI revealed five factors which have been labelled Factor 1 - Gender Variance, Factor 2 - Sexual Orientation, Factor 3 - Religious Rigidity, Factor 4 - Age Differences, and Factor 5 - Unity-Diversity.

Factor 1, Gender Variance has to do with how people respond to those who are different in gender than themselves. Factor 2, Sexual Orientation is a measure of how people respond to others of a sexual orientation different from their own. Religious preference, Factor 3, Religious Rigidity measures people's response to religious differences. Factor 4, Age Differences, measures people's response to chronological variance in others. Factor 5, Unity-Diversity measures whether or not a person feels that diversity is a strength or weakness for our society.

The THDI is easy to administer and requires about thirty minutes to complete. It can be used to conduct pre and post tests to determine amount of change in tolerance as result of the course or other types of experimental treatment.

TOLERANCE FOR HUMAN DIVERSITY-THDI

This questionnaire was designed to help explore attitudes towards various groups of citizens within the United States. Please read each question and mark the answer which most closely describes your feelings. It is important that you mark the questions as truthfully as possible. Giving the socially acceptable answer rather than the answer that most accurately describes how you feel causes problems in the interpretation of the scores so please answer as accurately as possible. YOUR PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY ARE PROTECTED BY THE FACT THAT NO PERSONAL INFORMATION SUCH AS YOUR NAME IS TO BE INDICATED ANYWHERE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR ANSWER SHEET. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Please mark all answers on the answer sheet provided.

How often do you interact with people in the following categories?

^A= Constantly B=Frequently C= Regularly D= Occasionally E= Never

1. Handicapped/disabled/differently abled.
2. Someone racially different from yourself.
3. Someone who belongs to a faith/religion/denomination different from your own.
4. Someone a generation older than yourself.
5. Someone a generation younger than yourself.
6. Someone belonging to a socioeconomic level that is different from your own.
7. Someone whose sexual orientation is different from your own.
8. Someone of the opposite gender.

A=Strongly Agree B=Agree C=Disagree D=Strongly Disagree

9. Diversity among American citizens is what makes this country strong.

10. Assuming that they have the comparable job skills handicapped and abled persons make equally good employees.

11. I would not marry a person of a different race/ethnicity.

12. America would be a better place if men and women stuck to their assigned roles.

13. I feel anxious when I talk with members of the opposite sex.

A= Strongly Agree, B =Agree, C =, Disagree and D= Strongly disagree.

14. I would not be roommates or housemates with a person of a different race/ethnicity

15. People who are poor just don't want to work.

16. I feel comfortable in a group of people where I am in the racial minority.

17. America would be a better place if we deported all of the gay people.

18. I would not be ashamed to admit that one of my family members had a sexual orientation different from mine.

19. I feel nervous when I see or have to interact with a person who is differently abled either mentally or physically.

20. I would attend church with friends of mine who belonged to a faith/religion/denomination that was different from my own.

21. I would not object to having housing for the poor in my neighborhood.

22. There is only one true religion/faith.

23. Most jobs can be done effectively regardless of the gender of the worker.

24. Both men and women are equally trustworthy.

25. Children should be seen and not heard.

26. Public buildings should be made accessible to the handicapped.

27. In America many people are poor due to situations beyond their control.

28. American unity is not as high as it should be because of the many differences in race, language, and religion of its citizens.

29. I would not be ashamed to admit that a person in my family belonged to a different race/ethnicity.

30. People of religions/faiths/denominations different from mine often have practices that are questionable or strange.

31. I feel comfortable around people much older than me.

A = Strongly Agree, B = Agree, C = Disagree, D =Strongly Disagree

32. People who suffer from mental retardation are of little benefit to society since they contribute very little.

33. I would not hesitate to date a person of a different race/ethnicity.

34. If a hearing impaired person can speak s/h% should not use sign language in the presence of people who can hear.

35. I would be comfortable at most gatherings where a majority of the people were of a sexual orientation different from my own.

36. People of the opposite gender have too many irritating habits and manners.

37. Monetary wealth and material possessions are the most important indicators of how successful a person is.

38. I feel anxious around people much younger than me.

39. I feel comfortable attending church where the religion/ faith/denomination is different from mine.

40. Talking and interacting with people who have much more or much less money than I do does not cause me anxiety.

41. People of the opposite gender are more similar to me than different from me.

42. Old people have too many irritating habits and manners.

43. A couple with a sexual orientation different from my own would be allow%d in my home.

44. America would be a better place if everyone belonged to the same religion/faith/denomination.

45. Talking to little children can be interesting.

46. Americans who remain loyal to their own subculture can be equally as loyal to the United States as a whole.

47. People should be forced to retire at a certain age because old people don't think as well as young people.

48. America would be a stronger country if there was more tolerance for differences among its citizens.

49. If I know a person has a sexual orientation different from my own I restrict my interactions with him/her.

50. Diversity among American citizens is what has weakened the fabric of this country.

TOLERANCE FOR HUMAN DIVERSITY INVENTORY
Scoring Instructions

The following questions, Patterns of Interaction 1-8 should be scored

A=5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1

Add 1-8 with scores ranging from 8-40

The following questions which are positive:

9, 10, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46, 48

should be scored as follows:

A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1

The following negative questions:

11, 12,13, 14, 15, 17,19, 22, 25, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44, 47, 49,50

should be scored as follows:

A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4

Add 9 through 50 with scores ranging from 42-168